

Statement of Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Senate Judiciary Committee
***“Examining the Eligibility Requirements for the Radiation Exposure Compensation Program
to Ensure all Downwinders Receive Coverage”***
June 27, 2018

Thank you Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein for holding this hearing and to Senator Crapo and Senator Booker for presiding today. I also wish to thank Senator Crapo for his bill, S. 197, that seeks to address inequities in the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act program and Mr. Robert Celestial, President of the Pacific Association for Radiation Survivors, for his testimony today and for his tireless advocacy on behalf of downwinders.

I want to address a further inequity.

Guam is the southernmost island in the Marianas archipelago and should rightfully be included in legislation expanding compensation to those downwind from nuclear test sites. Guam is included in S. 197 and the House companion legislation, H.R. 2049.

However, the remaining islands of the Marianas archipelago, the Northern Mariana Islands, which sit north of Guam, including at the island Rota just 40 miles away, are left out of the discussion and the legislation.

It would seem impossible that downwind effects on persons on Guam, situated 1,200 miles away from the Pacific nuclear testing conducted by the U.S. Government and the Atomic Energy Commission from 1946 to 1962, would NOT similarly effect persons in the Northern Marianas during that time.

The Congressionally required 2005 report of the National Research Council of the National Academies *“Assessment of the Scientific Information for the Radiation Exposure Screening and Education Program”*, concluded “... that Guam did receive measurable fallout from atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. Residents of Guam during that period should be eligible for compensation under RECA in a way similar to that of persons considered to be downwinders.”

However, the National Research Council failed entirely to discuss the impact that the fallout from the same atmospheric testing had on the Northern Marianas, located as close as 40 miles from Guam. Perhaps this is because in 2005 the Northern Marianas Islands, though part of the United States, had no representation in Congress. There was no one to advocate for inclusion when Congress required the scientific study of radiation exposure.

The evidence is lacking as to the effect of radiation fallout on the Northern Marianas only because no one has examined it. That is an injustice that needs to be corrected and needs to be corrected in time so that downwinders in the Northern Marianas at that time, as well as those on Guam, receive just compensation.

Thank you for your consideration.